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SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 2007

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Former Riley aide says Siegelman affidavits possibly 'sour grapes'

BIRMINGHAM (AP) — Republican Gov. Bob Riley's former chief of staff said allegations of a political plot to prosecute former Democratic Gov. Don Siegelman could stem from a state contract.

The allegations contained in affidavits by Mark Bollinger and Rainsville lawyer Dana Jill Simpson have been reported widely in the media but not filed in court.

Former Riley Chief of Staff Toby Roth said Bollinger's company, Global Disaster Services, lost a bid to clean up millions of scrap tires stockpiled in Attalla.

The \$7.1 million contract, awarded last year by the Riley administration, went to C.W. Owens Enterprises of Southside, which submitted a lower bid.

Simpson worked for Bollinger's company.

"I think it certainly raises suspicions about their accusations," Roth told The Birmingham News for a story Saturday. "This has got a sour grapes aspect to it."

Bollinger, a former aide to a Democratic attorney general in Alabama and in the Alabama Bureau of Investigation, disagreed, saying, "There was nothing retaliatory at all."

Simpson wrote Riley a letter in August on behalf of Global Disaster Services, according to documents produced by

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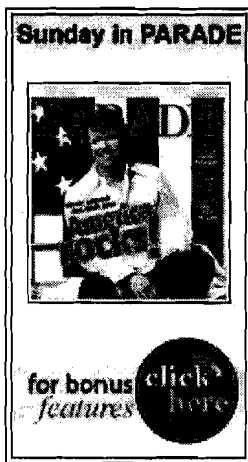
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Riley's press office.

"I wanted to provide you with the following information before you officially award the Attalla Tire Dump clean up and make your press announcement," she wrote.

The letter included a copy of a Georgia order saying Owens had been hauling scrap tires to an Alabama landfill that had not been approved to accept used tires.

Simpson said in her affidavit that, in a 2002 conference call, she heard Republican Bill Canary tell Riley's son and lawyer, Rob Riley, that White House adviser Karl Rove had told him the Department of Justice was investigating Siegelman.

Canary and other participants say they don't remember such a conversation.

At the time of the call cited in the affidavit, Siegelman was seeking a recount in his re-election bid, which he narrowly lost to Riley.

Simpson said she has been a Republican for years and, although she worked for Riley in 2002, last year worked in the campaign of former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore.

Siegelman, in an e-mailed response to questions, said, "I am not at all surprised that Karl Rove has been named as a conspirator" in the prosecution.

Bollinger signed his affidavit to verify that Simpson had told him about the phone conversation earlier.

Siegelman was convicted on corruption-related charges last year and has long made an issue of the involvement of Bill Canary's wife in his prosecution. His sentencing is set for June 26.

Leura Canary, the U.S. attorney for the Middle District of Alabama, stepped aside from the investigation in May 2002, after objections were raised by Siegelman's lawyer.

Louis Franklin, the chief prosecutor in the Siegelman and Richard Scrushy case, said Karl Rove had "no role whatsoever in bringing about the investigation or prosecution" of Siegelman.

"It is intellectually dishonest to even suggest that Mr. Rove

influenced or had any input into the decision to investigate or prosecute Don Siegelman," Franklin has said.

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